

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

Filed: November 29, 2018

ROBERT RHODES,

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UNPUBLISHED

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No. 16-597V

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Petitioner,

*

Special Master Gowen

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v.

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Joint Stipulation; Influenza (Flu);
Transverse Myelitis (TM).

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SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES,

*

Respondent.

*

Nancy Routh Meyers, Ward Black Law, Greensboro, NC, for petitioner.

Debra A. Filteau Begley, United States Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for respondent.

DECISION ON STIPULATION¹

On May 20, 2016, Robert Rhodes (“petitioner”) filed a petition in the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (“Program”).² Petition (ECF No. 1). Petitioner alleged that he developed Transverse Myelitis (“TM”) as a result of receiving the influenza (“flu”) vaccination on November 13, 2014. *Id.* at ¶ 22.

On November 29, 2018, the parties filed a joint stipulation in which they stated that a decision should be entered awarding compensation to petitioner. Stipulation (ECF No. 67). Respondent denied that petitioner’s alleged TM, or any other injury, was caused-in-fact by a flu vaccination. *Id.* at ¶ 6.

¹ Pursuant to the E-Government Act of 2002, *see* 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2012), **because this decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I intend to post it on the website of the United States Court of Federal Claims.** The court’s website is at <http://www.uscfc.uscourts.gov/aggregator/sources/7>. Before the decision is posted on the court’s website, each party has 14 days to file a motion requesting redaction “of any information furnished by that party: (1) that is a trade secret or commercial or financial in substance and is privileged or confidential; or (2) that includes medical files or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy.” Vaccine Rule 18(b). “An objecting party must provide the court with a proposed redacted version of the decision.” *Id.* **If neither party files a motion for redaction within 14 days, the decision will be posted on the court’s website without any changes.** *Id.*

² The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program is set forth in Part 2 of the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755, codified as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (2012) (“Vaccine Act” or “the Act”).

Maintaining their above-stated positions, the parties nevertheless now agree that the issues between them shall be settled and that a decision should be entered awarding compensation to petitioner according to the terms of the joint stipulation attached hereto as Appendix A.

The joint stipulation awards:

A lump sum of \$20,000.00 in the form of a check payable to petitioner. This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a),

I find the stipulation reasonable and I adopt it as the decision of the Court in awarding damages, on the terms set forth therein.

Accordingly, the Clerk of the Court **SHALL ENTER JUDGMENT** in accordance with the terms of the parties' stipulation.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Thomas L. Gowen

Thomas L. Gowen
Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment is expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

ROBERT B. RHODES,

Petitioner,

v.

**SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,**

Respondent.

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No. 16-597V
SPECIAL MASTER
THOMAS L. GOWEN

STIPULATION

The parties hereby stipulate to the following matters:

1. Petitioner filed a petition for vaccine compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 to 34 (the "Vaccine Program"). The petition seeks compensation for injuries allegedly related to petitioner's receipt of the influenza ("flu") vaccine, which vaccine is contained in the Vaccine Injury Table (the "Table"), 42 C.F.R. § 100.3 (a).
2. Petitioner received a flu vaccination on or about November 13, 2014.
3. The vaccine was administered within the United States.
4. Petitioner alleges that the flu vaccine caused him to develop Transverse Myelitis ("TM"), and that he experienced the residual effects of this condition for more than six months.
5. Petitioner represents that there has been no prior award or settlement of a civil action for damages as a result of his condition.
6. Respondent denies that petitioner's alleged TM, or any other injury, was caused-in-fact by a flu vaccination.

7. Maintaining their above-stated positions, the parties nevertheless now agree that the issues between them shall be settled and that a decision should be entered awarding the compensation described in paragraph 8 of this Stipulation.

8. As soon as practicable after an entry of judgment reflecting a decision consistent with the terms of this Stipulation, and after petitioner has filed an election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services will issue the following vaccine compensation payment:

A lump sum of \$20,000.00 in the form of a check payable to petitioner. This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).

9. As soon as practicable after the entry of judgment on entitlement in this case, and after petitioner has filed both a proper and timely election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), and an application, the parties will submit to further proceedings before the special master to award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in proceeding upon this petition.

10. Petitioner and his attorney represent that they have identified to respondent all known sources of payment for items or services for which the Program is not primarily liable under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), including State compensation programs, insurance policies, Federal or State health benefits programs (other than Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1396 et seq.)), or by entities that provide health services on a pre-paid basis.

11. Payment made pursuant to paragraph 8 and any amounts awarded pursuant to paragraph 9 of this Stipulation will be made in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(i), subject to the availability of sufficient statutory funds.

12. The parties and their attorneys further agree and stipulate that, except for any award for attorney's fees and litigation costs, and past unreimbursable expenses, the money provided pursuant to this Stipulation will be used solely for the benefit of petitioner as contemplated by a strict construction of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a) and (d), and subject to the conditions of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g) and (h).

13. In return for the payment described in paragraphs 8 and 9, petitioner, in his individual capacity, and on behalf of his heirs, executors, administrators, successors and/or assigns, does forever irrevocably and unconditionally release, acquit and discharge the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services from any and all actions or causes of action (including agreements, judgments, claims, damages, loss of services, expenses and all demands of whatever kind or nature) that have been brought, could have been brought, or could be timely brought in the Court of Federal Claims, under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 et seq., on account of, or in any way growing out of, any and all known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected personal injuries to or death of petitioner resulting from, or alleged to have resulted from, the flu vaccine administered on or about November 13, 2014, as alleged by petitioner in a petition for vaccine compensation filed on or about May 20, 2016, in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 16-597V.

14. If petitioner should die prior to entry of judgment, this agreement shall be voidable upon proper notice to the Court on behalf of either or both of the parties.

15. If the special master fails to issue a decision in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation or if the Court of Federal Claims fails to enter judgment in conformity with a decision that is in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation, then the parties' settlement and this Stipulation shall be voidable at the sole discretion of either party.

16. This Stipulation expresses a full and complete negotiated settlement of liability and damages claimed under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, as amended, except as otherwise noted in paragraph 9 above. There is absolutely no agreement on the part of the parties hereto to make any payment or to do any act or thing other than is herein expressly stated and clearly agreed to. The parties further agree and understand that the award described in this Stipulation may reflect a compromise of the parties' respective positions as to liability and/or amount of damages, and further, that a change in the nature of the injury or condition or in the items of compensation sought, is not grounds to modify or revise this agreement.

17. This Stipulation shall not be construed as an admission by the United States or the Secretary of Health and Human Services that petitioner's alleged TM, or any other injury, was caused-in-fact by a flu vaccination.

18. All rights and obligations of petitioner hereunder shall apply equally to petitioner's heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and/or assigns.

END OF STIPULATION


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Respectfully submitted,


PETITIONER:


ROBERT RHODES


**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
PETITIONER:**


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Dated: 11/29/18